

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) A method of controlling an information processing apparatus connected to a plurality of control devices over a network, said method comprising:

selecting, at a given one of the plurality of control devices, a specific one of a plurality of controlled hardware portions of the information processing apparatus to be controlled by the given one of the plurality of control devices;

transmitting, from the given one of the plurality of control devices to the information processing apparatus over the network, an identification number corresponding to the selected one of the plurality of controlled hardware portions and identification information corresponding to the given one of the plurality of control devices;

storing, in a control correspondence table of the information processing apparatus, the identification number corresponding to the selected one of the plurality of controlled hardware portions and the identification information corresponding to the given one of the plurality of control devices that were transmitted by the given one of the plurality of control devices such that the identification number corresponding to the selected one of the plurality of controlled hardware portions is associated with the identification information corresponding to the given one of the plurality of control devices;

repeating said selecting step, said transmitting step and said storing step using a further one of the plurality of control devices and a further one of the plurality of controlled hardware portions to associate the identification information corresponding to the further one of the plurality of control devices with the identification

number corresponding to the further one of the plurality of controlled hardware portions;

transmitting a control request from the given one of the plurality of control devices or from the further one of the plurality of control devices to the information processing apparatus over the network, the control request including the identification information corresponding to the transmitting control device;

referring to the control correspondence table to obtain the identification number corresponding to the controlled hardware portion of the information processing apparatus that is associated with the identification information corresponding to the transmitting control device; and

controlling the associated portion of the information processing apparatus based on the control request.

2. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the given one of the plurality of control devices and the further one of the plurality of control devices each transmit to the information processing apparatus through an IEEE1394 digital interface.

3. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said selecting step includes sending a first pass-through command to the information processing apparatus from the given one of the plurality of control devices or from the further one of the plurality of control devices, and said controlling step includes sending a second pass-through command to the information processing apparatus from the given one of the plurality of control devices or from the further one of the plurality of control devices, the first and second pass-through commands being respectively chosen from an AV/C Panel Subunit Model and Command Set.

4. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the associated portion of the information processing apparatus is operable to reproduce software information recorded on a digital versatile disc.

5. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the given one of the plurality of control devices and the further one of the plurality of control devices each transmit to the information processing apparatus through a wireless communication interface.

6. (previously presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein wireless communication is carried out using the Bluetooth communication standard.

7. (previously presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein wireless communication is carried out over infra-red wavelengths.

8. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the associated portion of the information processing apparatus is operable to reproduce audio visual information recorded on a hard disc.

9. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the given control device and the further control device is a digital television receiver.

10. (previously presented) An information processing apparatus connectable to a plurality of control devices over a network, said information processing apparatus comprising:

a plurality of controlled hardware portions, a specific one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions being selected by a given one of the plurality of control devices to be controlled by the given one of the plurality of control devices;

a receiver operable to receive an identification number that is transmitted over the network by the given one of the plurality of control devices and corresponding

to said selected one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions and identification information corresponding to the given one of the plurality of control devices;

a storage unit operable to store, in a control correspondence table, the identification number corresponding to said selected one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions and the identification information corresponding to the given one of the plurality of control devices that were transmitted by the given one of the plurality of control devices such that the identification number corresponding to said selected one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions is associated with the identification information corresponding to the given one of the plurality of control devices;

said receiver being further operable to receive an identification number corresponding to a further one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions and identification information corresponding to a further one of the plurality of control devices that are transmitted over the network by the further one of the plurality of control devices;

said storage unit being further operable to store, in the control correspondence table, the identification number corresponding to said further one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions and the identification information corresponding to the further one of the plurality of control devices that were transmitted by the further one of the plurality of control devices such that the identification number corresponding to said further one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions is associated with the identification information

corresponding to the further one of the plurality of control devices;

said receiver being further operable to receive a control request transmitted over a network from the given one of the plurality of control devices or from the further one of the plurality of control devices, the control request including the identification information corresponding to the transmitting control device; and

a controller operable to refer to the control correspondence table to obtain the identification number corresponding to said controlled hardware portion of said information processing apparatus associated with the identification information corresponding to the transmitting control device, and to control the associated portion of said information processing apparatus based on the control request.

11. (previously presented) An information control system, comprising:

an information processing apparatus having a plurality of controlled hardware portions; and

a plurality of control devices;

a given one of said plurality of control devices and a further one of said plurality of control devices each including:

a selector operable to select a specific one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions to be controlled by that control device, and

a transmitter operable to transmit over a network to said information processing apparatus an identification number corresponding to said selected one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions and identification information corresponding to that control device;

said information processing apparatus including:

a receiver operable to receive the identification number corresponding to said given one of said plurality of control devices and the identification information corresponding to its selected one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions that were transmitted by said given one of said plurality of control devices, and

a storage unit operable to store, in a control correspondence table, the identification information corresponding to said given one of said plurality of control devices and the identification number corresponding to its selected one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions that were transmitted by said given one of said plurality of control devices such that the identification information corresponding to said given one of said plurality of control devices is associated with the identification number corresponding to its selected one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions,

said receiver being further operable to receive the identification information corresponding to said further one of said plurality of control devices and the identification number corresponding to its selected one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions that were transmitted by said further one of said plurality of control devices,

said storage unit being further operable to store, in the control correspondence table, the identification information corresponding to said further one of said plurality of control devices and the identification number corresponding to its selected one of said plurality of controlled hardware

portions that were transmitted by said further one of said plurality of control devices such that the identification information corresponding to said further one of said plurality of control devices is associated with the identification number corresponding to its selected one of said plurality of controlled hardware portions;

said transmitter of said given one of said plurality of control devices and said transmitter of said further one of said plurality of control devices each being further operable to transmit a control request from that control device to the information processing apparatus over the network, the control request including the identification information corresponding to that control device;

said receiver of said information processing apparatus being further operable to receive the transmitted control request;

said information processing apparatus further including:

a controller operable to refer to the control correspondence table to obtain the identification information included in the received control request to obtain the identification number corresponding to the associated controlled hardware portion of said information processing apparatus, and to control the associated portion of said information processing apparatus based on the received control request.

12. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising transmitting the control correspondence table from the information processing apparatus to at least another information processing apparatus over the network.

13. (previously presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said receiver of said information processing apparatus is further operable to receive a transmission from the given one of the plurality of control devices or from the further one of the plurality of control devices through an IEEE1394 digital interface.

14. (previously presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said receiver of said information processing apparatus is further operable to receive a pass-through command from the given one of the plurality of control devices or from the further one of the plurality of control devices, the pass-through command being chosen from an AV/C Panel Subunit Model and Command Set.

15. (previously presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said associated portion of said information processing apparatus is operable to reproduce software information recorded on a digital versatile disc.

16. (previously presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said receiver of said information processing apparatus is further operable to receive a transmission from the given one of the plurality of control devices or from the further one of the plurality of control devices through a wireless communication interface.

17. (previously presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said associated portion of said information processing apparatus is operable to reproduce audio visual information recorded on a hard disc.

18. (previously presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising a transmitter operable to transmit the control correspondence table from said information processing apparatus to at least another information processing apparatus over the network.

19. (previously presented) The information control system according to claim 11, wherein said information processing apparatus includes a transmitter operable to transmit the control correspondence table from said information processing apparatus to at least another information processing apparatus over the network.